



Testimony on SB 1065: An Act Concerning Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors

Public Health Committee Hearing

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The Connecticut Certification Board Inc. (CCB) offers our strong support of SB 1065 which reinstates the alcohol and drug counseling educational requirement for the Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC) credential. We recognize the importance of assuring high educational and training standards for all alcohol and drug professionals practicing in the State of Connecticut and believe that all applicants for the LADC should demonstrate their competency in alcohol and drug counseling-specific education as part of the LADC application process.

Since the inception of the alcohol and drug counselor licensing legislation in the late 90s, all LADC candidates have been required to demonstrate their competency in alcohol and drug counseling by completing a counseling-related master's degree; 300 hour supervised practicum; 3 years of supervised work experience; 360 hours of education with no less than 240 of the hours in alcohol and drug counselor education; and passing a written exam. In 2012, several major changes were made to the LADC requirements which effectively removed the alcohol and drug counselor-specific education requirement and substantially weakened the master's degree requirement. We are very concerned about the recent modifications to the LADC requirements as they are not in the best interest of the profession or the people of Connecticut and, most importantly, the changes are potentially detrimental to the clients seeking services. As a result, we strongly urge the passage of SB 1065.

SB 1065 reinstates the alcohol and drug counseling-specific education requirement for all LADCs which we see as essential in determining LADC candidates have sufficient education in alcohol and drug counseling prior to becoming an LADC. The CCB works closely with the Department of Public Health to administer the written exam for all LADC and CADC (Certified Alcohol and Drug Counselor) candidates and believes that unless the alcohol and drug counselor educational requirement is reinstated, it will be difficult to determine the competency of LADC candidates which will ultimately serve to undermine public protection.

Finally, we urge the Public Health Committee to consider similar action around the LADC master's degree requirement. All LADC candidates should be required to complete a counseling-related master's degree in order to become licensed which was initially required of all LADC candidates. The new requirements implemented in 2012 make it possible for a candidate with a master's degree *in any area* to become license-eligible if they also complete 18 credit hours of counseling content which effectively renders the master's degree requirement meaningless as it provides no assurance of competency in alcohol and drug counseling.

We applaud SB 1065 as a good start in restoring one of the critical requirements of the LADC and strongly urge the Public Health Committee to consider going further by reinstating the master's degree requirement to ensure public safety and competency of all LADC candidates in Connecticut.

Since 1981, the CCB has played a central role in promoting high standards of practice for alcohol and drug counselors in Connecticut and provides credentialing, ethics/grievance oversight, training and workforce development services in order to protect the public by enhancing recovery-oriented workforce capacity. The CCB is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit with over 1600 certified professionals in Connecticut and beyond and is a member of the IC&RC – International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium.